

Appl. No. 10/630,948
Response to Final Office Action of Jan. 27, 2006

REMARKS

In the aforementioned Office communication, the examiner rejected claims 7-11 and indicated claim 12 was objected to as being in improper form but was not rejected under prior art. Inasmuch as the Office action is a final rejection, applicant has cancelled claims 10 and 12 and rewritten independent claim 7 from which claims 8, 9, and 11 are dependent so that it is consistent with original claim 12. Accordingly, claim 7 and its dependent claims are felt to be allowable, not only because the examiner indicated the allowability of the subject matter of claim 12 in the Office action, but for other reasons set forth hereafter.

The Ritter, Renz, and Jones patents were cited by the examiner in the rejection of claims 7-11 and while these claims are now written so as to be directed to the combination of a panel and a pair of carriers consistent with claim 12, it is felt prudent to point out the reasons why the remaining claims in the application are patentably distinct from the cited references.

First of all, in the claims remaining in the application, they are directed to the combination of a carrier and a paneling system wherein the carrier has an arm that extends longitudinally from a vertically extending member with the arm including a first upwardly opening U-shaped channel and a second upwardly opening U-shaped channel. The panel of the paneling system is defined as having a first hook-shaped flange and a second hook-shaped flange with the first hook-shaped flange being received in the first channel of the carrier and the second hook-shaped flange being received in the second channel of the carrier. The prior art does not show such a combination.

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In the Ritter patent cited by the examiner, there are no upstanding channels on a carrier but rather downwardly opening channels and the downwardly opening channels do not receive first and second flanges of a panel. Rather one downwardly opening channel receives a mounting insert and the other downwardly opening channel overlies a filter. Accordingly, not only are the channels and the carriers inverted relative to what is claimed in the present invention, they do not both receive a flange of a panel.

The patent to Renz discloses a ceiling mounting system having vertical profiled members 7 to which are connected support members 10 and 11 which are utilized to support a panel. The support members have what might be considered two upwardly opening channels but only one channel receives a panel while the other channel is used to connect the support members to the vertical profile members 7. Accordingly, this patent likewise does not show or suggest the claimed subject matter of the remaining claims in the application where the carriers have two upwardly opening channels which receive first and second flanges, respectively, of a panel.

The final reference relied upon by the examiner to Jones shows a panel with what might be considered as having flanges 14 and 22 but they are directed upwardly and therefore could not be received in upwardly opening channels on a carrier. Rather, the flange 14 is received with a similar flange of an adjacent panel in a downwardly opening channel of a carrier but the carrier only has one downwardly opening channel and further the second flange is not received in anything. Accordingly, this system is not even remotely close to the claimed subject matter in the present application.

According to the above, it will be appreciated, the claims remaining in the application are consistent with claim 12, which was indicated by the examiner as being

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objected to for having multiple claimed dependencies and those multiple claimed dependencies have been removed herein. Further, since the subject matter of amended claim 7 is not only consistent with claim 12 but is patentably distinct from the prior art for the reasons identified, it is felt the claims remaining in the application are patentably distinct from the prior art.

There being no objections to the specification and no remaining rejectable subject matter in the claims, it is felt the application is in condition for allowance and such action is courteously requested.

Dated this 28th day of February 2006.

Respectfully submitted,



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GMP/dtc